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ABSTRACT

These three papers address various aspects of community college/high school articulation in Virginia. First, Eunice B. Kirkbride's paper, "Articulation in Northern Virginia," examines the process of smoothing the path from high school to community college by evaluating prior learning and eliminating the need to repeat previously learned material. Kirkbride outlines the goals of Northern Virginia Community College's articulation plan with the Fairfax County Public Schools; reviews progress on the implementation of these goals; and describes work undertaken through a Sears Partnership Development Fund grant to create a national model for articulation and cooperative education. Next, "The Articulation Process: Theory into Practice," by Jim Reynolds, examines ways of approaching the task of developing an articulation agreement, focusing on the membership, purpose, and role of the advisory/oversight committee and the "working committee" responsible for creating the agreement. Finally, "The Need for Articulation and the Benefits for the High School and Community College," by Betty Hinson, addresses the issues of why articulation efforts benefit the high schools, and what high schools can do to help implement articulation. (UCM)

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Annual Conference:
"The Academic Profession in Virginia and the Nation"
November 6 & 7, 1986
Norfolk, Virginia

Presentations from session entitled:

Articulation: A Strategy for Wooing High School Students While Meeting the Needs of Society

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Session Papers:

"Articulation in Northern Virginia"
Eunice B. Kirkbride, Director
Keeping America Working Project
Northern Virginia Community College

"The Articulation Process: Theory into Practice"
Jim Reynolds, Counselor
Northern Virginia Community College

"The Need for Articulation and the Benefits for the High School and Community College"
Betty Hinson, Vocational Counselor
Fairfax County Public Schools

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State Council for Higher Education

in Virginia

1986 Conference

The Academic Profession in Virginia and the Nation

Norfolk, Virginia

November 6 & 7, 1986

Session Title:

Articulation: A Strategy for Wooing High School Students While Meeting the Needs of Society

Presenter: Dr. Eunice B. Kirkbride

Northern Virginia Community College

Project Director, Keeping America Working

Funded by:

Sears Partnership Development Fund

Title: Articulation in Northern Virginia

Articulation in Northern Virginia

In Virginia, one in four students who enters high school does not graduate, according to Governor Baliles. The American work force is often underprepared to meet the demands of a technically sophisticated society. This results in frustration and dissatisfaction for both producers and consumers.

Keeping America Working - that is the name of our grant and that is the goal of vocational/technical education. The Sears Partnership Development Fund is making it possible for community colleges to put into action various types of partnerships aimed at strengthening the American work force. Northern Virginia Community College, in concert with Germanna Community College and the 21 school systems in their jurisdictions, is developing close working alliances to advance technical education at both the high school and community college levels.

Articulation is the process by which these alliances are developed. The term "articulation" means to smooth the path from high school to community college by evaluating prior learning and eliminating the need to repeat previously learned material. Any occupation has certain introductory elements which all members of that occupation need to know. If someone comes into a community college program with no prior knowledge of the occupation, he or she needs to learn the introductory elements before progressing to more advanced learning. If a student has successfully completed a related occupational program in high school, and has developed beginning level competencies, it is a waste of time, money and human resources to have to repeat the introductory elements.

The need for better coordination of high school and community college programs has been evident for some time. In 1983 the Annandale campus of Northern Virginia Community College received a Virginia Department of Education mini-grant to begin working with Fairfax County Public Schools to plan this coordination. I began my involvement with the project at this time. In 1984 the basic articulation plan was written and has guided our efforts ever since.

Although the plan refers to Northern Virginia Community College and Fairfax County Public Schools, it has proved applicable to other systems as well. I am going to try to show you how it all fits together.

The goals are as follows:

#1. STRENGTHEN STUDENT'S POTENTIAL IN CAREER LADDER DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ADVANCED , STRUCTURED VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

The intent of this goal is to encourage students to see opportunities for developing their careers by remaining in the educational system until they acquire sufficient skills for career satisfaction. The minimum point for this career satisfaction is designated as completion of the program certificate or associate degree.

#2. PROVIDE MORE OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMUNICATION REGARDING CURRICULUM COORDINATION AND STUDENT EXPECTATIONS.

The objective here is to foster dialogue between the educational levels for both administrators and faculty. The intent is to help students understand not only the entrance requirements for community college programs,

but also the exit requirements, so they will clearly understand the differences between the two levels of preparation.

#3. ENHANCE COORDINATION OF STUDENT SERVICES BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL LEVELS.

This goal overlaps goal #2. It calls for the same sort of dialogue with counselors as a further means for enhancing student understanding of career requirements and benefits.

#4. PROVIDE FOR APPROPRIATE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN ARTICULATED PROGRAM PLANNING.

Since the overall goal of this project is to strengthen the preparation of the American workforce, input from community employers is essential to assure that workers are prepared with the necessary qualifications. Employers are included on program advisory committees and articulation planning committees. This involvement will increase as we move along.

#5. COORDINATE COOPERATIVE EDUCATION EXPERIENCE WITH ARTICULATED PROGRAMS.

As our project has progressed, we have seen the need to add this goal to strengthen real world experience through incorporation of more cooperative education opportunities.

#6. MAKE MAXIMUM USE OF EXISTING FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL AT HIGH SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEVELS.

This goal emphasizes economy in student preparation and looks ahead to further sharing between educational levels.

#7. MARKET ARTICULATED VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL EDUCATION THROUGH COORDINATED PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAMS IN HIGH SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES.

We will expand knowledge about this project and encourage students to enter and remain in technical education programs through meetings such as this conference, through teacher presentations to student groups, through participation in high school career fairs and PTA meetings, as well as media presentations.

These goals are being achieved, albeit slowly. This year we are beginning to implement some of the agreements signed in 1985, by admitting our first few students. Their progress will be monitored carefully.

Progress is not a straight line event. We move back and forth among the goals, although generally in a forward direction. We are now at the implementation phase with some agreements, and at the beginning phases with other, newer agreements.

The initial articulation agreements between NVCC and Fairfax County Public Schools were signed in 1985. Since then several other agreements were signed between NVCC and Alexandria City Public Schools, and Arlington County, Prince William County and Loudoun County Public Schools. There has been experimentation with different formats, depending on the programs involved. In most agreements a testing arrangement has been included to evaluate prior learning. An experimental element has also been included whereby we expect to gather data which ultimately will justify dropping the testing component.

A basic premise we have all followed is that we do not want to grant advanced placement indiscriminately. We want to assure students in articulated programs, entering with advanced standing, that they have a reasonable chance for success.

In 1985-86, after our project was two years underway, we received a planning grant from the Sears Partnership Development Fund which allowed us to expand the scope of the project. This grant, part of the Keeping America Working project, is funded by Sears, Roebuck and Company. The project is administered by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, and is co-sponsored by the Association of Community College Trustees. Under the planning grant we began to develop a national model for articulation. The grant efforts focus on two programs - computer information systems and electronics, although throughout the college work has continued on other programs as well. It became clear that the logical extension of the articulation effort should be to include a cooperative education component, and that will be a major thrust this year.

Our major effort last year was to present a regional workshop to inform employers, high school and community college faculty and administrators about the whole concept of the high school/community college connection in technical education. Experiential, reality based education was emphasized to develop critical career skills. Our keynote speaker was Dr. Dale Parnell, President of AACJC and author of The Neglected

Majority. He spoke of the "neglected majority" as that vast group of students in the center of the normal curve who will not complete the baccalaureate degree, and who will form the bulk of the American workforce. These students are leaving high school inadequately prepared for the rigors of the real world. They have limited vision of success and they do not have a career focus. All the literature tells us that people change jobs several times in a lifetime and that today's high tech society demands high level skills for survival. Students sometimes have to be helped in spite of themselves.

Our project is designed to reach students and their parents early in their high school experience to help them see the benefits of technical education and to help them understand that a technical career, while different from a baccalaureate career, affords a valid, satisfying and rewarding life style.

This year we have an implementation grant from Sears to continue the work we started last year. By the end of the year, we will have introduced as many students, parents and employers as possible to the idea of planning and preparing for technical careers. We will show that high school is not enough--that advanced preparation at the community college is necessary if young people are to succeed in the real world. We will build-in experiential education which will give a realistic view of the world and help to socialize students into the world of work. Through cooperative education agreements the student will earn increasing levels of job responsibility as more theoretical knowledge is gained to couple with practical application of that knowledge.

As we move ahead, we have progressed past the administrative level. The next step is to have teacher to teacher contact, to build faculty alliances and to take advantage of the enormous influence faculty members have on students' lives. The administrative support for this project at both levels has been outstanding. That is a critical issue. Giving faculty members the opportunity to know and respect each other is another critical issue. Informing and involving guidance and counseling personnel is also critical, as is involving employers. Parents and students need accurate information to make informed decisions.

The groundwork has been laid for addressing all of these issues and now we are extending the process to do so. The whole process takes time. The readiness factor is very important, and telling the story over and over is a large part of helping people reach the readiness point.

Meanwhile, as I said earlier, progress is not a straight line event. We need to evaluate and revise our implementation procedures on a regular basis. Plans which look satisfactory on paper do not always work out smoothly, as we have discovered. Part of the practical research which is an element of this project has demonstrated that student test results in some areas were less than we hoped. As an example, high school students who took the Computer Information Systems entrance exam did not do as well as college students who took the exam after the introductory course. This was contrary to our expectations, since it seemed in advance that the high school and college curricula matched quite well. We consulted with our

high school colleagues to decide how much of the problem was related to the testing procedure and how much was curriculum related. How we did this was important. We approached it as a matter of mutual inquiry, keeping in mind all the time that our goal was to advance and strengthen technical education. Our increased communication had positive results. The second round of tests yielded 34% increase in the pass rate, and a ten point increase in the mean score on the exam.

We have made considerable progress. A project which started between one campus and one school system has now spread to five campuses at NVCC and another totally different small rural college. We are involved all together with 21 school districts. We are all part of one state system and yet we have such diverse needs. There are so many different pieces to the puzzle. Even so, the process which we have developed works. The process is our primary product, which we wish to share with other educators who will join us in furthering technical education in Virginia and elsewhere.

Eventually, our final project report to AACJC will be available in written form. Meanwhile, if we can help others interested in articulation, we will be glad to do so.

SCHEV CONFERENCE 1986

The Academic Profession

in Virginia and the Nation

Norfolk, VA November 6 & 7, 1986

SESSION TITLE: Articulation: A Strategy for Wooing High School Students While Meeting the Needs of Society.

Panelist: Mr. Jim Reynolds, Counselor
Northern Virginia Community College
Alexandria, VA.

Topic: The articulation process: Theory into Practice.

I would like to spend my time talking about the "theory into practice" aspect of working on an articulation agreement. There are many ways that one can approach the task of developing an articulation agreement. All of us who have been in education, even for a short time, know that the most acceptable way in education is to form committees. Committees can be used to develop articulation agreements between secondary and postsecondary school systems. I would like to spend a few minutes talking about the make-up, purpose, and process used in two types of committees that have been useful to us in the articulation process.

We have used two types of committees, one an advisory or oversight committee and the other a "working committee" which develops the actual articulation agreements. Let me first cover the membership and general purpose of the advisory or oversight committee.

The members of the advisory committee should reflect top administrative support and commitment. The following list suggests members that might make up an articulation advisory committee.

- High level administrative people from college and high school system (College president, high school district superintendent, etc.).

- College: Division or Department chairmen who have technical programs (AAS).

- High school: Director of Vocational Education for high school system and/or Directors of Vocational Education Centers.

- Student service people at the high school and college level (guidance counselors).

The general purpose of the advisory committee is to implement and oversee the entire articulation process. The committee carries out its goals by (a) selecting programs that are to be articulated, and, (b) appointing members to a working committee which will develop the agreement. The advisory committee may also want to create an Articulation Plan that outlines the committee's goals and objectives.

When the advisory committee selects programs for articulation, it might consider the following:

- Start slow by selecting one program that is seen by all levels as an important program to articulate. In our case, it was the Automotive Technology program.

- Start with a program where the faculty members/teachers see the need and the benefits of an articulation agreement.

Now let's take a look at the "working committee." As mentioned earlier, the members of the working committee are appointed by the articulation advisory committee. Some guidelines that might be helpful in appointing members to a working committee are:

- Committee needs to be kept as small as possible so work can be facilitated.

- Most members need to be content experts and that means, currently teaching courses in high school or college. Might use curricular specialists if they have current course knowledge.

- Need participation of student service personnel from high school and college level. A counselor might serve as chairman of the committee. A counselor might have less "turf" conflict and may also have group facilitation skills.

- Members need to be open to change and see the benefits of articulation agreements. Members need

to support an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect for other committee members.

The major purpose of the working committee is to develop a written articulation agreement for a particular program. The work of this committee can best be accomplished if there is an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. The following are some of the concerns that the working committee may have to work through:

- Competency-based vs. non competency-based education. If all programs use competency-based curriculum, then the match-up will be easier. High school programs tend to be more hands-on with college courses having more theory. Hands-on vs. theory conflicts may be resolved by giving elective credits.

- To test or not to test? We have signed agreements that use testing and we have signed others that do not use testing. My bias is to try to get by without using tests. Testing can be helpful but it adds another whole dimension to the articulation process, such as test validation, etc..

- One way the working committee members can get to know each other is to have the committee's meetings at different school locations. Have meetings at the high school or vocational center and others at the college. Committee members get a chance to see the other's facilities. This should help promote an atomosphere of mutual respect and trust.

- Agreement should be reviewed by as many people as possible. Faculty and administrators at all levels need to review and respond to the final draft of the articulation agreement. This review needs to take place before the formal agreement is signed.

In summary, the two types of committees just described can be effective tools to develop articulation agreements for secondary and postsecondary educational systems. One of the key elements in the process that occurs in both types of committees is to open lines of communication. Good communication is the key element that will produce effective and useful articulation agreements. When we have effective communication, we have the possibility for progress.

Articulation:

A Strategy for Wooing the High School While Meeting the Needs of Society

The Need for Articulation and the Benefits for the High School and Community College

Panel Presentation by

Betty Hinson

Vocational Counselor

Fairfax County Public Schools

November 6, 1986

Public schools, community colleges and four year colleges share common goals which are educating young people, motivating them to achieve excellence and preparing a work force that will meet society's needs by the 1990s and beyond. High school vocational education programs at two and four year institutions share another concern. All three are interested in maintaining and increasing their enrollment. Articulation among high schools, community colleges and four year institutions provides a means of accomplishing these goals. Two issues relating to the high school's role in articulation are addressed in the following discussion; first, why articulation is needed in the high schools; second, what the high schools can do to help implement articulation.

Since the inception of the community college, vocational educators in the public schools have seen a need to coordinate technical programs. During the sixties and early seventies, community colleges were expanding at such a rapid rate that the rapidly increasing student body absorbed the full attention of the community college. Enrollment stabilized and began declining in the late seventies and early eighties. The gap between the high school and community college became obvious. Articulation between the high schools and community colleges was initiated for several reasons. First, course content was being duplicated at the high school and community colleges. Second, few high school vocational students were continuing their training at the community colleges. Third, both high schools and community colleges recognized a need to prepare a more highly skilled work force for the 1990s and beyond. The two institutions began working together to achieve these mutual goals.

The public schools had a renewed emphasis on excellence in the eighties. The state of Virginia instituted a new general diploma with additional math and science requirements. An advanced studies diploma was created to recognize the academically talented. The push for excellence has had its greatest impact on the college bound student. High schools demonstrate their success in achieving excellence by focusing on the accomplishments of their most academically talented students. SAT scores, national merit scholars and the number of students entering competitive colleges are most often cited as indicators of a school's success in achieving excellence. However, less than twenty-five percent of our nations's high school students fall in the college bound tract.

Nationally, fifty percent of the high school students are enrolled in a general education tract. These students have vague educational and career goals. They aspire to college but do not take the academic courses required for admission or maintain acceptable grade point averages. The highest percentage of high school dropouts come from this group of students. These students need defined educational and career goals. Many of the students have the ability to become our technical work force. Many could complete four year degree programs if they became motivated. Informing these students of community colleges, associate degree programs and the articulation process may open new career and educational options.

A third group within the high school is vocational students. In the past, these students' education has been considered to terminate with high school graduation. Today, we see vocational students as young people who value a practical education. Students enrolled in vocational programs

come from all segments of the student population. Many are college bound. Some of the college bound are enrolled in advanced placement courses and the gifted and talented programs (top two percentile). The difference in these students and other students planning to attend four year colleges is that they know exactly what career they plan to pursue and why. They know that practical experience is just as important as theoretical knowledge in the working world. We have other vocational students who will enter community colleges, trade and technical schools, apprenticeship programs and others who will enter full time employment immediately after high school.

High school vocational centers have as their main goal the preparation of young people for the future work force. Our vocational center, and I think most vocational centers, have the following additional goals for students. First, we want students to understand the career ladders in their vocational field. We want them to know the educational requirements, responsibilities and salary at each level of the career ladders. Second, we want students to know that their high school education is not terminal. Vocational education in high school is only the first step of their education. Third, we want our students to become life long learners who will return for educational training throughout their career. We want them to know the process for getting that training. Fourth, we provide "hands-on" experience because we realize that some students must experience a career before they can establish a career goal and make a committment to work toward that goal. If the students define a career direction while they are still in high school, they can easily add the additional academic courses they need to pursue advanced education. Vocational education at the

high school level encourages advanced education which is necessary for articulation to be successful.

The Licensed Practical Nursing program in the Fairfax County Public Schools has been articulating with Northern Virginia Community College since 1980. As a result, the health occupations programs have related careers, career ladders and educational training integrated throughout their curriculum. One health occupation program, the Health Assistant, is designed so that students visit numerous health care facilities and have work experience at some of these facilities. Based on an informal survey taken by the classroom teacher over the last four years, eighty percent of these students choose to pursue advanced training. This training may be through the licensed practical nursing program at a community college or four year college. Fifty percent say they would have pursued the advanced training without having enrolled in the health assistant program. Thirty percent of the students indicate they are choosing additional education in a health field because of their health assistant class. In this instance, articulation has had a positive impact on both the quality and quantity of students seeking advanced education.

Vocational teachers are able to reach vocational students. This is not the case with the students enrolled in the general programs. The issue we must address is what can high schools do and how can colleges support their effort to make articulation a success? First, high schools can provide career education that addresses career ladders, technical training, associate degrees and the articulation process. Second, counselors can address those issues when they are providing individual career counseling

to students. Third, schools can inform parents of the two plus two process, that is, beginning their technical training the last two years of high school and continuing at the community college with an associate degree program. Fourth, vocational educators can teach the career ladder for their field in their programs. Fifth, county wide emphasis can be given to achieving excellence in the vocational and technical fields.

In summary, articulation can increase the effectiveness for delivering vocational and technical education. High school students will be better prepared for the community college. Students that are better prepared will be more successful and more likely to continue their education at four year colleges and universities.

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